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The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/55/L.42

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

Summary

As indicated in section III of the present statement, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/55/L.42, an additional appropriation of $191,800 would be required under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

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I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-fourth session, the General Assembly authorized the continuation of the provision of resources for two staff (1 at the P-4 level and 1 at the General Service level) for 2000 in support of the Central American peace process pursuant to resolution 54/118 of 15 December 1999. The current proposals reflect the maintenance in 2001 of those resources authorized for 2000.

II. Draft resolution A/55/L.42

A. Request contained in the draft resolution

2. By operative paragraphs 8 and 16 of draft resolution A/55/L.42, the General Assembly would:

(a) Request the Secretary-General, the bodies and programmes of the United Nations system and the international community to continue to support and verify in Guatemala the implementation of all the peace agreements signed under United Nations auspices, compliance with which was an essential condition for a firm and lasting peace in that country, and to consider the implementation of the Peace Agreements as the framework for their technical and financial assistance programmes and projects, stressing the importance of constant and close cooperation among them in the context of the United Nations framework of assistance for the development of Guatemala;

(b) Request the Secretary-General to continue to lend his full support to the initiatives and activities of the Central American Governments, particularly their efforts to consolidate peace and democracy through the promotion of integration and the implementation of the comprehensive sustainable development programme, emphasizing the potential repercussions of natural disasters, in particular of hurricane Mitch, for the peace processes and the vulnerable economies of the region, and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session on the implementation of the resolution.

B. Relationship of the proposed request to the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

3. The above request relates to subprogramme 1.1, Prevention, control and resolution of conflicts, of programme 1, Political affairs, of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.[1]

C. Activities by which the proposed request would be implemented

4. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would, with respect to the requests outlined in paragraph 2 above:

(a) Continue to provide good offices, as required, as well as substantive support and political guidance to the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) in the fulfilment of its mandate;

(b) Continue to follow up on pending issues related to the peace agenda in El Salvador in full cooperation with the United Nations resident coordinator for El Salvador, who is also the representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the area;

(c) Continue to lend full support to the initiatives and activities of the Central American Governments, particularly in their efforts to consolidate peace and democracy.

D. Requirements at full cost

5. In the aftermath of the destruction caused by hurricane Mitch in October 1998, the nations of Central America came together with the United Nations system and bilateral donors to map out a comprehensive recovery plan laying the groundwork for sustainable development and the prevention of future disasters. As part of an inter-agency task force, the United Nations will continue to follow the process closely to ensure that the reconstruction/transformation efforts after hurricane Mitch contribute to the consolidation of peace and development in the Central American region.

6. In Guatemala, MINUGUA is carrying out the multifaceted mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly (verification, good offices, advisory services and public information) in support of the peace agreements signed in Guatemala in 1996. MINUGUA has also played a leading role, together with the other parts of the United Nations system and the international community at large, in a multifaceted exercise in peace-building. Important challenges still lie ahead, and the parties to the peace agreements have requested the United Nations to continue to support the consolidation of the peace process to 2003, with a special focus on socio-economic issues, rural development, strengthening of civilian power and various forms of citizen participation.

7. In El Salvador, the United Nations remains committed to the consolidation of the peace-building process, in full cooperation with UNDP in its task of assisting the Government of El Salvador in tracking the full implementation of the pending issues of the 1992 peace agreements. Verification and good offices functions will continue to be carried out by United Nations Headquarters.

8. It is anticipated that, should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, adequate support for all the above aspects of the efforts of the Secretary-General in Central America should be provided. This would require the continuation in 2001 of provisions of related resources equivalent to one staff member at the P-4 level for a political affairs officer and one General Service staff member.

9. The political affairs officer (P-4) would continue to monitor the Guatemala peace process and to provide backstopping and political guidance to the post-conflict peace-building activities of MINUGUA. Regarding El Salvador, the officer would assist in the joint UNDP/United Nations follow-up programme to ensure compliance with the provisions of the 1992 peace agreement with regard to the issues remaining from that agreement. He or she would follow developments in the region as a whole. When necessary, the officer would attend the United Nations inter-agency task force for the reconstruction and transformation of Central America and coordinate activities with field offices of the United Nations system. In addition,

he or she would brief and disseminate information to missions, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations currently interested in the peace process in Central America.

10. The estimated costs related to the salaries and common staff costs of the staff indicated in paragraph 8 above would amount to $191,800.

III. Action required from the General Assembly

11. The General Assembly, in its resolution 54/250 A of 23 December 1999, approved a provision of $90,387,200 for special political missions under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.[2] As noted in Assembly decision 54/477 B of 15 June 2000, the utilization of the provision for special political missions amounts to $66,074,600, and an unallocated balance of $24,312,600 remains against the provision of $90,387,200. Should the Assembly approve charges totalling $17,069,400 relating to actions taken by the Security Council regarding good offices, preventive diplomacy and post-conflict peace-building missions, as reported in the first performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (A/55/645) and the charge of $7,243,200 representing partial requirements for MINUGUA in 2001, as requested in the statement of programme budget implications of draft resolution A/55/L.33 on MINUGUA (A/C.5/55/24), the provision of $90,387,200 for special political missions would be fully utilized.

12. Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/55/L.42, an additional appropriation of $191,800 would be required under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 6* (A/53/6/Rev.1).

[2] Ibid., *Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 6* (A/54/6/Rev.1).